

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 USBERL 00551 231727Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W  
-----231737 014425 /46

O 231655Z FEB 77  
FM USMISSION USBERLIN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4086  
AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L USBERLIN 0551

EXDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/CE

E O 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR PGOV US WB UK FR UR  
SUBJ: ATTEMPTED SUICIDE BY HESS

REFS: A) USBERLIN 539; B) BONN 3233

1. RE BONN 3233, TERM "CORRESPONDENCE" (NOTE SPELLING WHICH WAS INADVERTENTLY CHANGED IN PROCESSING) REFERRED TO LETTERS BETWEEN HESS AND FAMILY. PRESS GUIDANCE WE RECOMMEND AND HAVE SINCE DISCUSSED WITH BRITISH AND FRENCH IS BASED ON POSSIBILITY THAT STORY WILL LEAK AND THAT ALLIES PRESS SPOKESMAN WILL BE FACED WITH QUESTION: "IS IT TRUE THAT?". IT SEEMS TO US THAT WE OWE AT LEAST CONFIRMATION OF FACT OF ATTEMPTED SUICIDE IF AND WHEN LATTER IS IN PUBLIC DOMAIN SINCE ALLIES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR PRISON AND WILL WISH TO DAMPEN RUMORS THAT SITUATION IS WORSE THAN IT REALLY IS.

2. REMAINDER OF PRESS GUIDANCE AGREED AD REFERENDUM ON FEB 23 WOULD BE THAT HESS IS UNDER MEDICAL CARE AND IN GOOD CONDITION. LATTER POINT IS TRUE AS OF AFTERNOON FEB 23, HESS HAVING BEEN EXAMINED BY DOCTORS MORNING  
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OF FEB 23 WHO NOTED NORMAL CARDIOGRAPH CONDITIONS ETC.

3. GOVERNORS' MEETING FEB 23 TACKLED PROBLEM OF WHETHER TO PERMIT SCHEDULED VISIT OF HESS' SON ON FRIDAY, FEB 25, AND HOW AND WHETHER TO INFORM HIM OF SUICIDE ATTEMPT OF FATHER. IT WAS DECIDED THAT IF DOCTORS AGREE AT FORMAL MEETING FEB 24 THAT THERE IS NO MEDICAL

REASON TO CANCEL VISIT OF HESS' SON, CHAIRMAN GOVERNOR (FRENCH) WOULD TAKE HESS' SON ASIDE BEFORE MEETING TO INFORM HIM OF EVENTS OF EVENING OF FEB 22. IF, ON CONTRARY, DOCTORS BE REMOVED TO HOSPITAL FOR OBSERVATION OR THAT VISIT FROM SON MIGHT BE OVERLY UPSETTING, FRENCH GOVERNOR WOULD THEN TELEPHONE HESS' SON OR WIFE WITH REPORT ABOUT ATTEMPTED SUICIDE. THEY WOULD OF COURSE HAVE TO PROVIDE REASON FOR THE SUDDEN CANCELLATION IN ANY EVENT. THIS PLANNING HAS BEEN TENTATIVELY AGREED BY THREE WESTERN MISSIONS BUT NOT BY SOVIETS, WHOSE PRISON GOVERNOR WAS THIS MORNING SPEAKING OF CANCELLING FRIDAY VISIT ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES. OTHER GOVERNORS POINTED OUT THAT VISIT HAD BEEN AGREED AND SCHEDULED BY FOUR POWERS AND COULD NOT SIMPLY BE TURNED OFF AT WILL OF ONE GOVERNOR.

4. HESS IS REPORTED TO BE CALM AND LUCID TODAY ALTHOUGH GOVERNORS KNOW FROM LONG EXPERIENCE HOW UNPREDICTABLE HE IS. HESS IS COMPLAINING ABOUT ROUND-THE-CLOCK PRESENCE OF A GUARD IN HIS CELL BUT HAS BEEN TOLD GENTLY THAT HE MUST LIVE WITH THIS BREACH OF PRIVACY IN VIEW OF HIS SUICIDE ATTEMPT.

5. WE WILL OF COURSE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO AVOID LEAK BUT WE ARE NOT HOPEFUL AS DOCTORS ETC. GO ABOUT CARRYING OUT THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES. DESPITE RISK OF LEAK FROM HESS' SON, WE FEEL THAT WE OWE HIM A REPORT ON HIS FATHER'S CONDITION, ESPECIALLY SINCE HE AND/OR MRS. HESS ROUTINELY RECEIVE REGULAR MEDICAL CONFIDENTIAL

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REPORTS FROM GOVERNORS. HIS COOPERATION IN NOT SENSATIONALIZING STORY IS MORE LIKELY TO BE FORTHCOMING IF WE TAKE HIM INTO OUR CONFIDENCE THAN IF HE LEARNS OF INCIDENT FROM ANOTHER SOURCE.

6. HESS APPARENTLY ATTEMPTED SUICIDE ONCE IN PAST SOME TEN YEARS AGO. THAT ATTEMPT WAS REPORTED IN BYRD'S BOOK ON HESS AND IS THEREFORE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE. GEORGE

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## Message Attributes

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**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** ATTEMPTED SUICIDE BY HESS  
**TAGS:** PFOR, PGOV, US, WB, UK, FR, UR, (HESS, RUDOLPH)  
**To:** STATE BONN  
**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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